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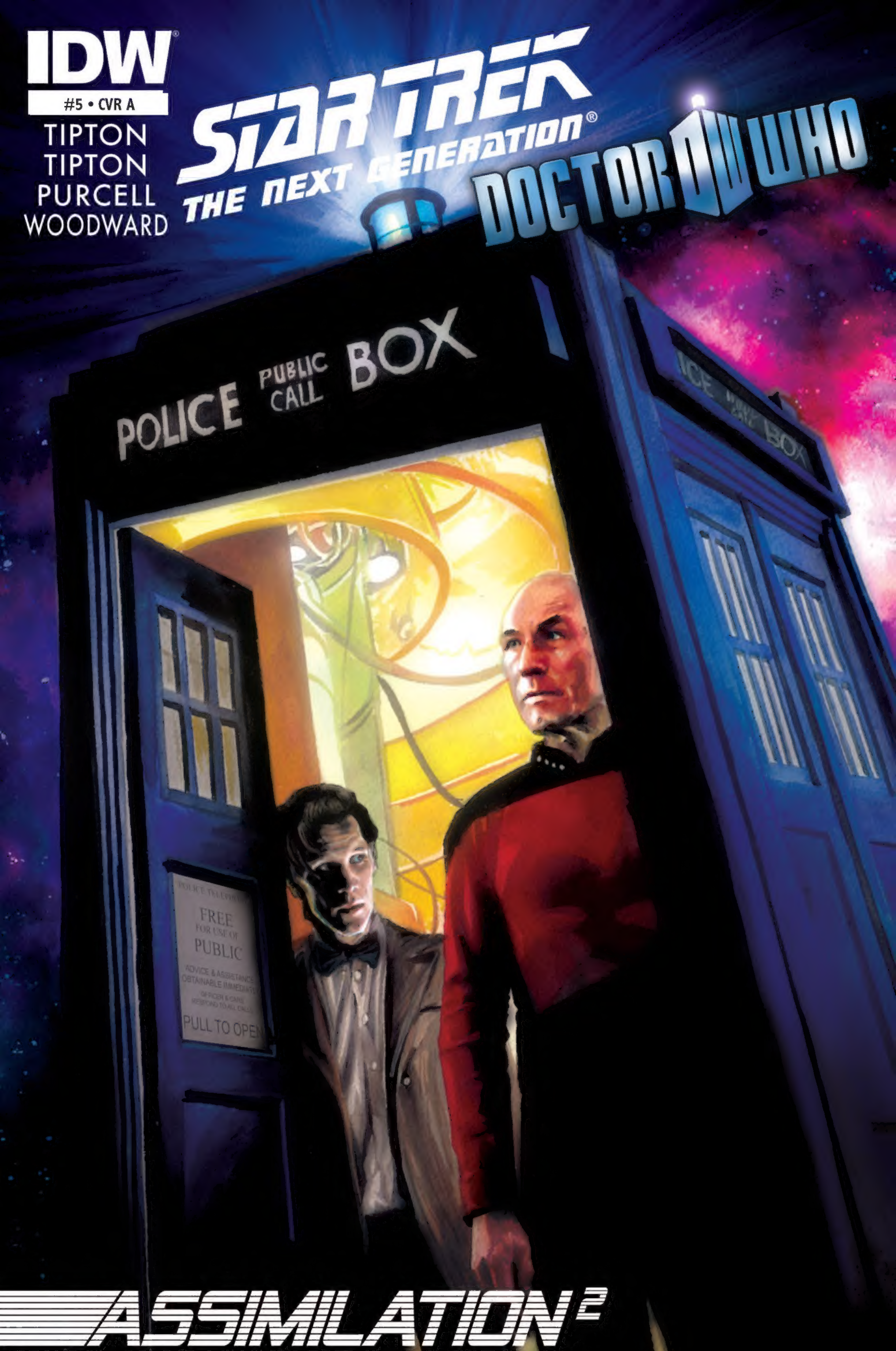
STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION® / DOCTOR WHO



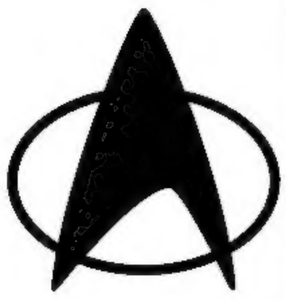
ASSIMILATION²

The story so far...

The Doctor is an alien, the last of the powerful Time Lords. He is an intrepid traveller through time and space, armed only with his incredible intelligence and his fix-anything sonic screwdriver. He travels alone, except for the human companions he befriends, briefly sharing his life with them and showing them the astonishing wonders of the universe.

Space... the Final Frontier. These are the voyages of the *Starship Enterprise*. Its continuing mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before.

Soon after Delta IV fell to an attack by the Borg and their new allies, the Cybermen, the *Starship Enterprise* discovered unexpected visitors had made their way on board the ship. Despite the counsel of Guinan, Captain Jean-Luc Picard remains suspicious of the Doctor and his companions. And when the Borg reaches out to Picard for help against the Cybermen, who have turned on them, the captain grimly refuses...



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CAPTAIN, I ASK YOU TO RECONSIDER. THE BORG MAY HAVE VALUABLE INFORMATION FOR US. WE NEED TO HEAR THEM OUT.

YOU HEARD ME, DOCTOR. THE ENTERPRISE WILL NOT OPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BORG.

CAPTAIN. LET'S AT LEAST HEAR WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY. THERE'S NO HARM IN LISTENING.
ABSOLUTELY NOT. HELM, LAY IN A COURSE FOR EARTH.
LT. WORF, LET STARFLEET KNOW THAT THE IMMEDIATE THREAT HAS PASSED.
TELL THEM WE ARE RETURNING TO ASSIST IN RESCUE OPERATIONS FOR THE PLANETS THAT WERE ATTACKED.
THE CYBERMEN WILL TRY TO CONQUER AND CONVERT ALL OF THE BORG NOW.
THEY WILL ONLY GROW STRONGER AND MORE DEADLY IN THEIR THIRST FOR POWER. WHAT ARE YOUR INTENTIONS?
I SAY LET THE BORG AND THE CYBERMEN FIGHT IT OUT. LET THEM KILL EACH OTHER.
BEEP-BEEP

IF THE CYBERMEN ARE INDEED HOPING TO STRIKE AT THE HEART OF THE BORG COLLECTIVE, I SAY MORE POWER TO THEM. LET'S SEE THE BORG HAVE A TASTE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE.
BEEP-BEEP

COME! WHAT IS IT?

GUINAN?!
I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE MY INTRUSION, CAPTAIN. BUT THE STAKES HAVE NEVER BEEN HIGHER, AND I'M AFRAID THAT ONLY THE DOCTOR AND I MAY REALIZE IT.

I WAS JUST TRYING TO CONVINCE YOUR CAPTAIN HERE THAT WE SHOULD OPEN COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE BORG AND CONSIDER THEIR OFFER OF COOPERATION. WE MAY WELL NEED THEIR HELP AGAINST THE CYBERMEN.

BUT HE WANTS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BORG AT ALL—
WELL, DOCTOR...

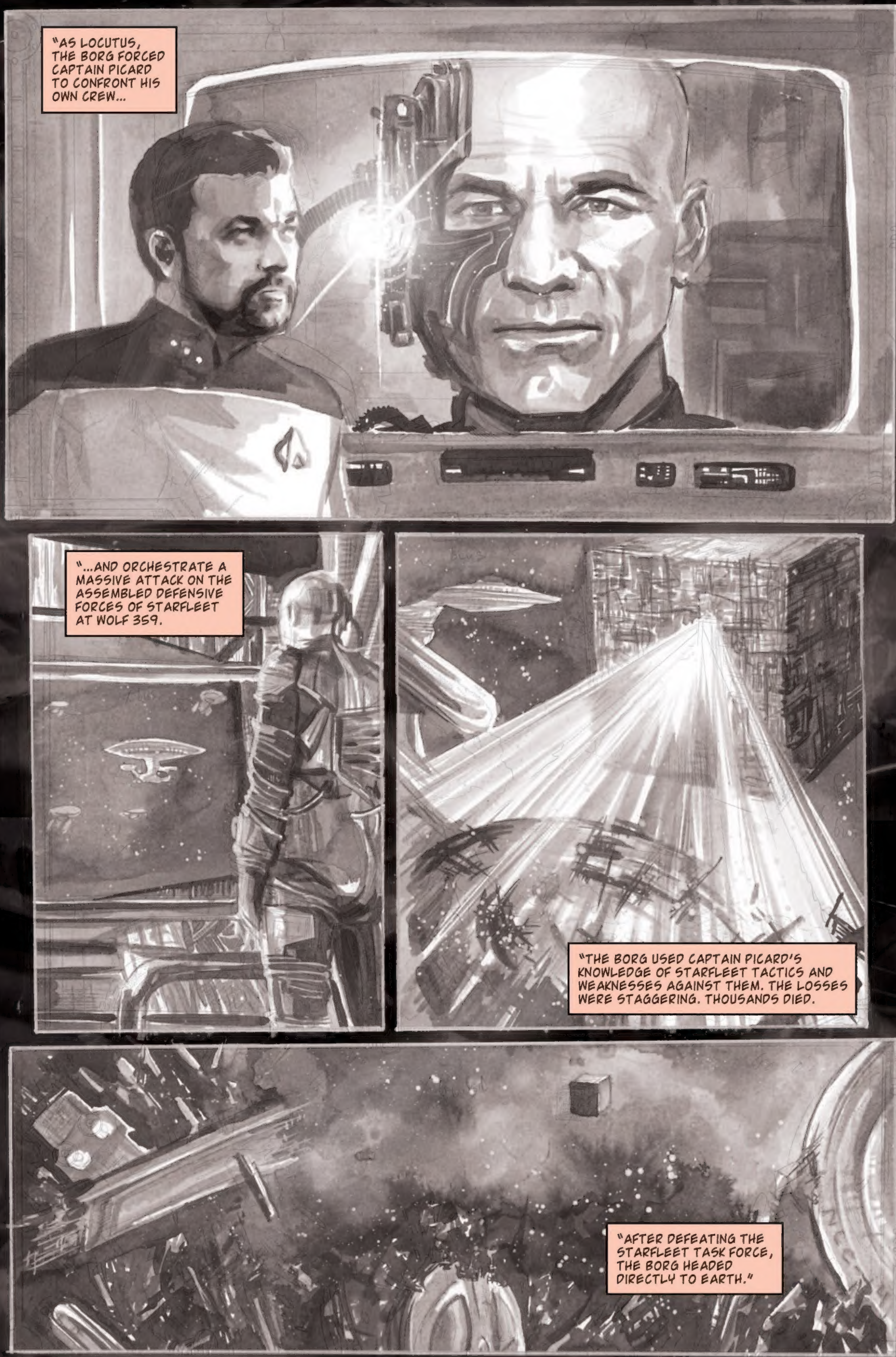
...CAPTAIN PICARD HAS SOME VERY GOOD REASONS TO BE DISTRUSTFUL OF THE BORG. DO YOU MIND IF I TELL HIM, CAPTAIN?
VERY WELL.

"NOT LONG AGO, THE BORG INVADED THE FEDERATION, WITH THE INTENT OF ASSIMILATING ALL OF ITS MEMBERS.

"THE BORG KIDNAPPED CAPTAIN PICARD...

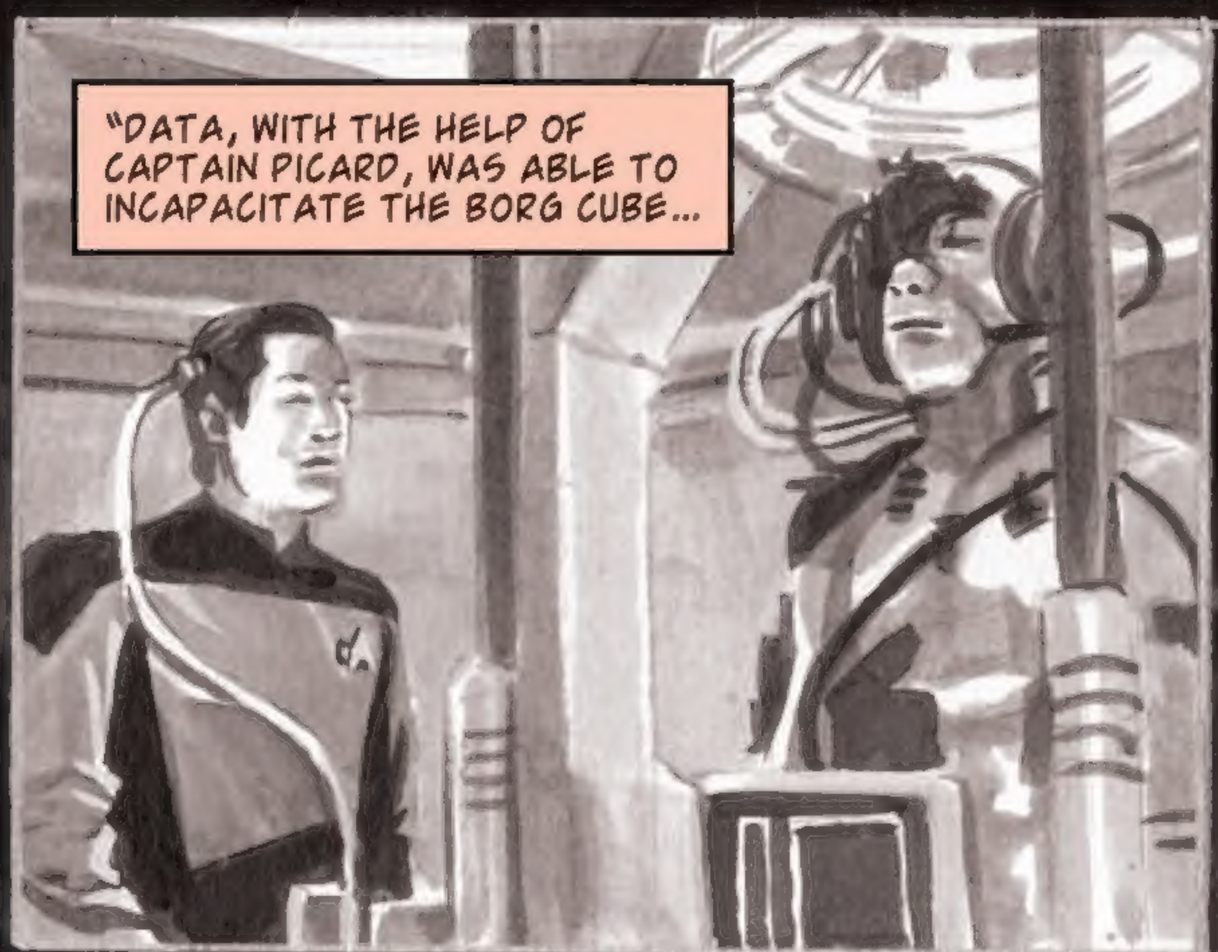
"...IN ORDER TO ASSIMILATE HIM INTO THEIR COLLECTIVE AND USE HIM AGAINST THE FEDERATION.

"THE BORG RENAMED HIM 'LOCUTUS,' AND INTENDED FOR HIM TO SERVE AS AN EMISSARY FOR THE COMPLETE ASSIMILATION OF THE WORLDS OF THE FEDERATION."


"AS LOCUTUS, THE BORG FORCED CAPTAIN PICARD TO CONFRONT HIS OWN CREW...
"...AND ORCHESTRATE A MASSIVE ATTACK ON THE ASSEMBLED DEFENSIVE FORCES OF STARFLEET AT WOLF 359.
"THE BORG USED CAPTAIN PICARD'S KNOWLEDGE OF STARFLEET TACTICS AND WEAKNESSES AGAINST THEM. THE LOSSES WERE STAGGERING. THOUSANDS DIED.
"AFTER DEFEATING THE STARFLEET TASK FORCE, THE BORG HEADED DIRECTLY TO EARTH."

"DATA AND WORF WERE ABLE TO RETRIEVE THE CAPTAIN FROM THE BORG CUBE...

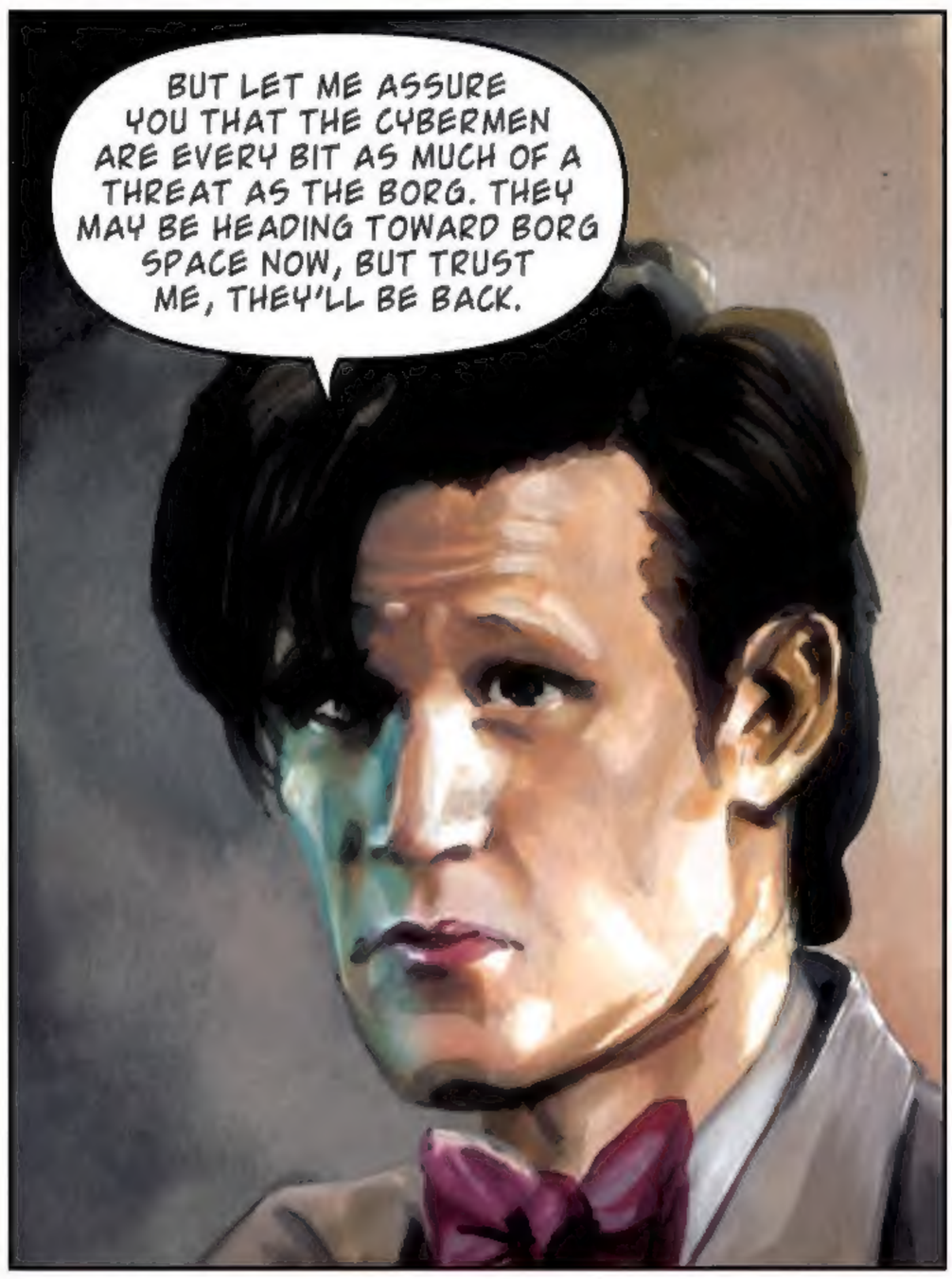
"...AS PART OF COMMANDER RIKER'S PLAN TO TURN THE TABLES ON THE BORG AS THE CUBE HEADED FOR EARTH.


"DATA, WITH THE HELP OF CAPTAIN PICARD, WAS ABLE TO INCAPACITATE THE BORG CUBE...

"...LEADING TO ITS SELF-DESTRUCTION.

"AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, DOCTOR, THIS EXPERIENCE HAS LEFT THE CAPTAIN WITH SOME STRONG FEELINGS TOWARD THE BORG."

AHH, NOW I SEE.
CAPTAIN PICARD, YOU HAVE MY DEEPEST SYMPATHY FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU. NO SENTIENT BEING SHOULD BE FORCED TO UNDERGO THAT SORT OF ENSLAVEMENT.


BUT LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT THE CYBERMEN ARE EVERY BIT AS MUCH OF A THREAT AS THE BORG. THEY MAY BE HEADING TOWARD BORG SPACE NOW, BUT TRUST ME, THEY'LL BE BACK.

WHO ARE THESE CYBERMEN, ANYWAY?
A RACE OF CYBORGS. THEY REPLACE THEIR ORGANIC PARTS WITH MECHANICAL ONES. THEY CONSIDER FLESH TO BE WEAK.
THEY FORCE OTHERS TO BECOME CYBERMEN THROUGH A PROCESS KNOWN AS CYBERCONVERSION, NOT UNLIKE THE ASSIMILATION USED BY THE BORG.
OFTEN THE ONLY REMAINING ORGANIC ELEMENT OF THEM IS A BRAIN HOOKED UP TO A METALLIC BODY.

THE CYBERMEN ARE NOT NATIVE TO OUR UNIVERSE, CAPTAIN, BUT THEY ARE PRESENT IN OTHER UNIVERSES. THEY CLAIM TO BE LOGICAL AND EMOTIONLESS, BUT IN FACT THEY ARE AMBITIOUS AND RUTHLESS IN THEIR PURSUIT OF CONQUEST.
THEY SEEK COMPLETE DOMINION OVER OTHER SPECIES AND WANT TO CONVERT ALL SENTIENT BEINGS INTO CYBERMEN.
THAT CERTAINLY REMINDS ME OF THE BORG.

THEY HAVE MUCH IN COMMON WITH THE BORG, BUT THE CYBERMEN DO NOT LIMIT THEIR PLANS FOR CONQUEST TO A SINGLE UNIVERSE. DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THEM CAN BE FOUND IN ALTERNATE UNIVERSES. AS THE CYBERMEN WERE SCOUTING NEW UNIVERSES TO INVADE, THEY FOUND THE BORG.

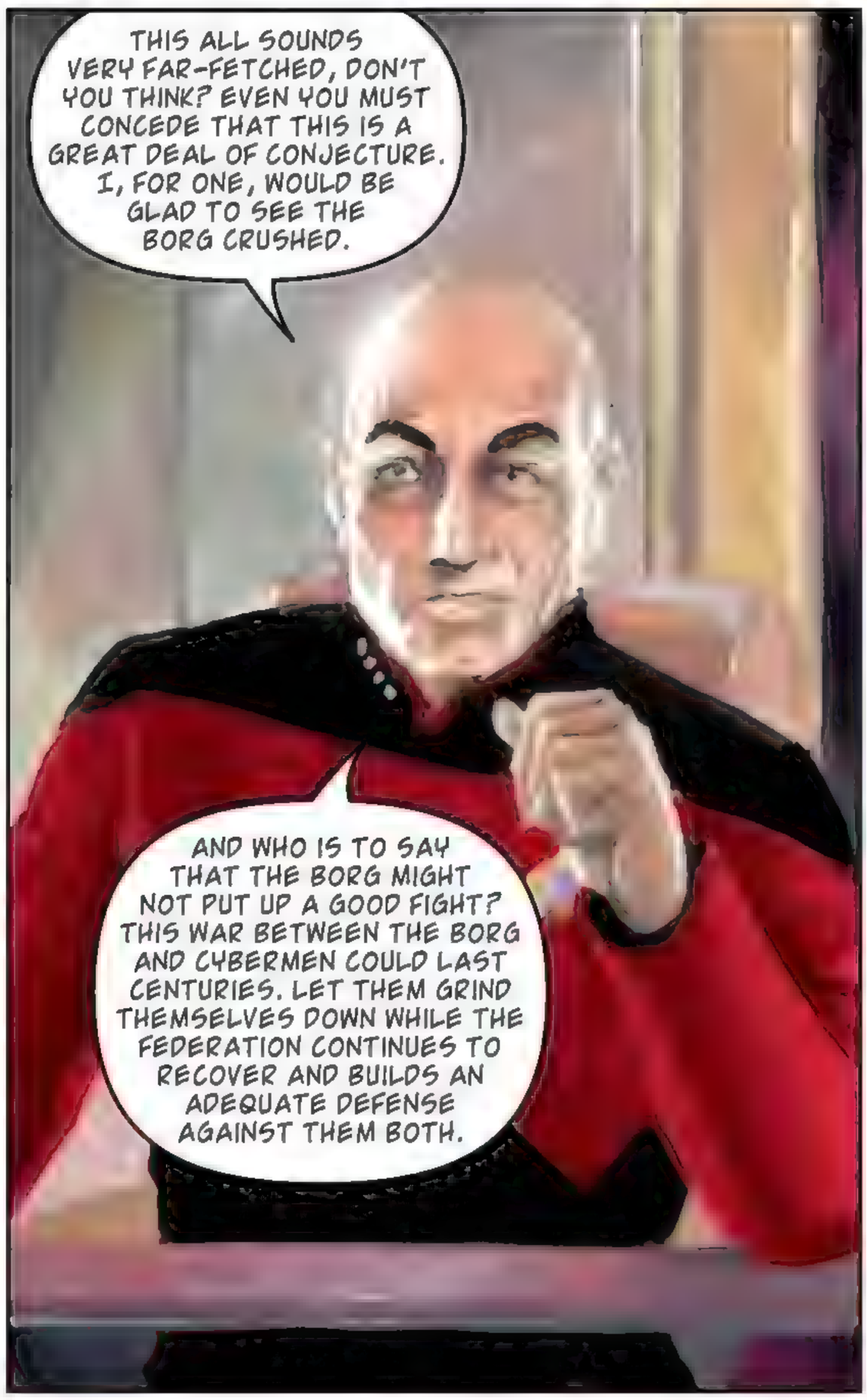
THE CYBERMEN MUST HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE BORG SEEMED LIKE KINDRED SPIRITS, AND BEGAN LAYING THE GROUNDWORK TO BRING THEMSELVES INTO THIS UNIVERSE SOME YEARS AGO. THAT'S WHEN YOU FIRST ENCOUNTERED THEM, DOCTOR, WITH THE EARLIER ENTERPRISE CREW.
YES. AND I THOUGHT I HAD STOPPED THEM IN THEIR TRACKS BACK THEN, BUT NOW IT IS APPARENT THAT THEIR PLAN CONTINUED UNABATED.

THE CYBERMEN MUST HAVE SOMEHOW CONVINCED THE BORG THAT THE TWO HAD MUCH IN COMMON, AND THAT THERE WOULD BE MUTUAL BENEFIT IF THE TWO WORKED TOGETHER AND EVENTUALLY MERGED INTO ONE.
BUT THE SHEER AMBITION OF THE CYBERMEN NATURALLY CANNOT BE CONTAINED. ONCE THE BORG STARTED TO TRUST THE CYBERMEN AS PART OF AN ALLIANCE, THE CYBERMEN COULD NOT HELP BUT REVERT TO THEIR TRUE NATURE. THEY MUST HAVE CRACKED ALL OF THE BORG SECURITY PROTOCOLS AND OVERWHELMED THEM.

AND NOW THE CYBERMEN ARE METHODICALLY CYBERCONVERTING THE ENTIRE BORG COLLECTIVE. ACQUIRING ALL THEIR RESOURCES, CONSUMING AND PROCESSING ALL OF THEIR ARCHIVES. NOW THEY ARE HEADING BACK TO THE BORG HOMEWORLD TO COMPLETE THE TASK.

THE THOUGHT OF THE CYBERMEN ENHANCED BY ALL OF THE RESOURCES OF THESE BORG... THE DEGREE OF UNRESTRAINED CONQUEST—IT DEFIES IMAGINATION.
THIS IS BAD, CAPTAIN. VERY BAD. FAR WORSE THAN I REALIZED.

THE CYBERMEN WON'T STOP ONCE THEY CONVERT THE BORG. THEY'LL BE BACK, JEAN-LUC. THEY'LL BE BACK TO CONVERT THE FEDERATION, THE ENTIRE ALPHA QUADRANT, THIS WHOLE GALAXY. AND THEY'LL USE ALL THEY LEARN FROM THE BORG TO DO THE SAME THING TO OTHER UNIVERSES, TOO.
WE HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO STOP THEM BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.


THIS ALL SOUNDS VERY FAR-FETCHED, DON'T YOU THINK? EVEN YOU MUST CONCEDE THAT THIS IS A GREAT DEAL OF CONJECTURE. I, FOR ONE, WOULD BE GLAD TO SEE THE BORG CRUSHED.
AND WHO IS TO SAY THAT THE BORG MIGHT NOT PUT UP A GOOD FIGHT? THIS WAR BETWEEN THE BORG AND CYBERMEN COULD LAST CENTURIES. LET THEM GRIND THEMSELVES DOWN WHILE THE FEDERATION CONTINUES TO RECOVER AND BUILDS AN ADEQUATE DEFENSE AGAINST THEM BOTH.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING, THOUGH, CAPTAIN. CYBERMEN MOVE FAST, VERY FAST. THEY ARE VERY EFFICIENT. A HORRIBLE, UNRELENTING CLOCKWORK.
SO YOU SAY. LET US SEE WHAT WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN.

MR. DATA, WHAT'S THE LATEST STATUS ON THE CYBERMAN FLEET?
I'VE CONFIRMED THEIR COURSE, SIR. THEY ARE HEADING DIRECTLY TOWARD BORG SPACE, TOWARD WHERE WE BELIEVE THE BORG HOMEWORLD TO BE.

THE BORG HAVE SENT SOME CUBES AGAINST THE CYBERMAN FORCES, BUT THEY HAVE ALL BEEN DESTROYED. THE CYBERMAN FLEET IS MOVING AT HIGH WARP NOW.

DO YOU SEE, CAPTAIN? IT'S ALL FALLING INTO PLACE.
ACKNOWLEDGED, DATA. CONTINUE WITH OUR COURSE BACK TO EARTH.

WHAT?
DOCTOR, EVEN IF EVERYTHING THAT YOU AND GUINAN ARE TELLING ME IS TRUE, WHAT GOOD IS THE ENTERPRISE GOING TO BE AGAINST THAT CYBERMAN FLEET? WE WOULD BE LIKE A MOSQUITO AGAINST A HERD OF ELEPHANTS. I WON'T SACRIFICE THIS VESSEL TO CHASE YOUR THEORIES.

COURSE LAID IN, CAPTAIN.
WARP FIVE, ENSIGN. ENGAGE.

YOUR MEDICAL FACILITIES HERE ARE ABSOLUTELY ASTOUNDING, DOCTOR CRUSHER. THERE'S PROBABLY NOT MUCH NEED FOR WARD NURSES ANYMORE.
DON'T KID YOURSELF, RORY. ALL OF THE ADVANCEMENT IN THE WORLD CAN'T REPLACE THE TOUCH OF A HUMAN HAND. WE'LL ALWAYS NEED DOCTORS AND NURSES MORE THAN TECHNOLOGY.

STILL, JUST THINK OF THE PEOPLE YOU MUST BE ABLE TO SAVE. IT'S THE HELPLESSNESS THAT GETS TO ME MOST SOMETIMES.

SO, YOUR HUSBAND IS A NURSE?
YEH. AT LEAST, HE WAS, BEFORE THE DOCTOR CAME ALONG.
SO HE'S HAD TO GIVE UP A LOT FOR THIS LIFE.

YEAH. I GUESS HE HAS.

DOCTOR? WHAT'S WRONG? WHERE'S THE CAPTAIN?

IT'S NO GOOD. THE CAPTAIN WON'T LISTEN TO REASON. HE REFUSES TO EVEN CONSIDER A MEETING WITH THE BORG. HE'S BLINDED BY HIS PAST.
DOCTOR, OUR PAST WITH THE BORG CANNOT BE EASILY FORGOTTEN BY ANYONE. LEAST OF ALL THE CAPTAIN.

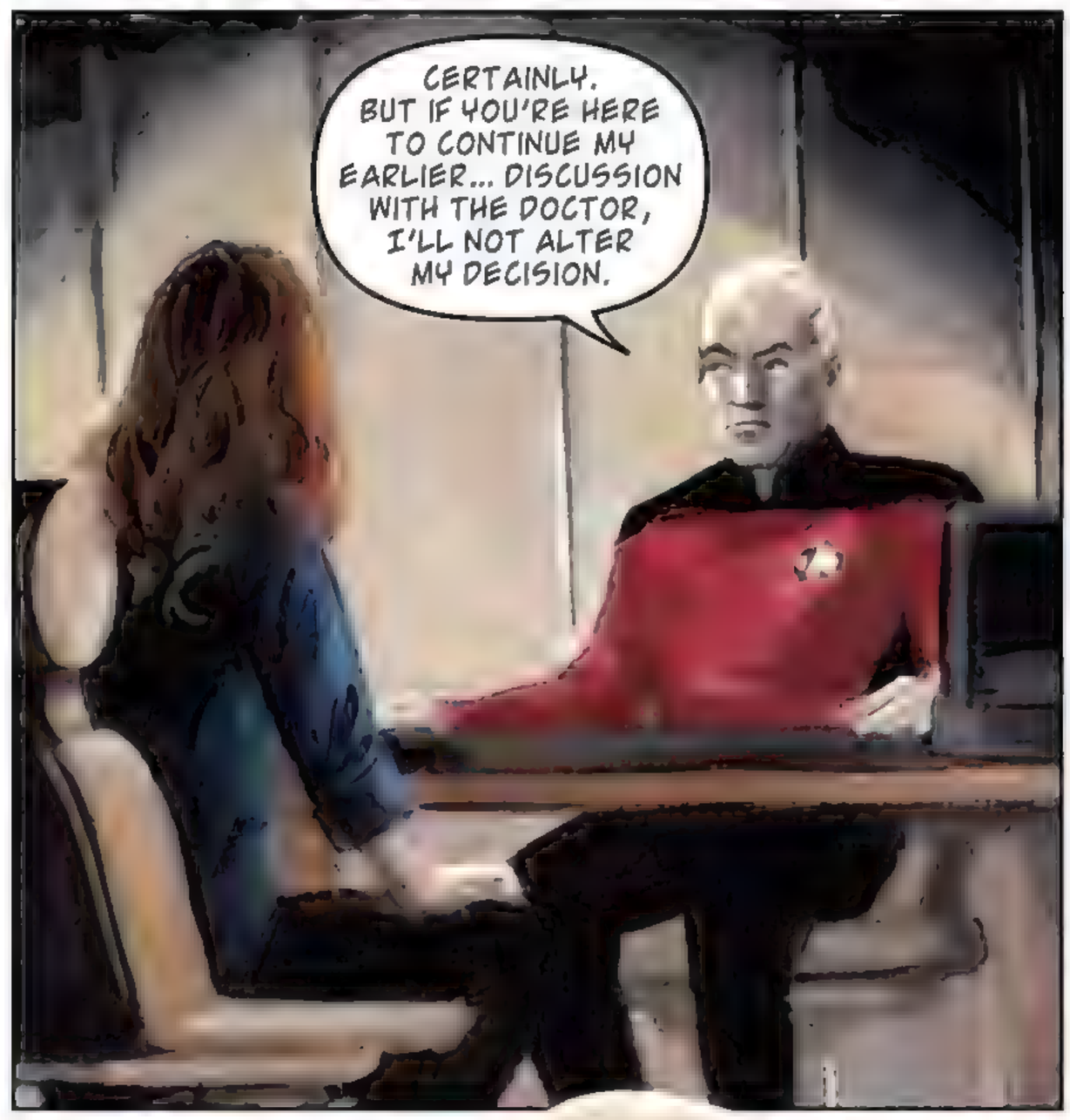
I UNDERSTAND THAT, COUNSELOR. BUT IGNORING THE CYBERMEN, EVEN FOR A MOMENT, CAN ONLY LEAD TO RUIN!
SO WHAT NOW?
WE'LL HAVE TO GO ON OUR OWN AND FIND A WAY OURSELVES.

YOUR HELP WOULD HAVE BEEN INVALUABLE.
PERHAPS, DOCTOR, YOURS WASN'T THE VOICE THE CAPTAIN NEEDED TO HEAR.

WHAT ARE YOU SMILING ABOUT?

BREE-DEET
COME!

MISS POND!
I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, CAPTAIN. MAY I COME IN?


CERTAINLY. BUT IF YOU'RE HERE TO CONTINUE MY EARLIER... DISCUSSION WITH THE DOCTOR, I'LL NOT ALTER MY DECISION.

NO, CAPTAIN PICARD. I JUST CAME TO SAY GOODBYE.

GOODBYE?

YES, WE'LL BE LEAVING, TO FIND SOME WAY TO TALK TO THE BORG, OR ELSE STOP THE CYBERMEN OURSELVES.
THAT'S MADNESS!
MADNESS IS KIND OF WHAT WE DO.

THIS IS A VERY DANGEROUS LIFE YOU LEAD, MISS POND, IS IT NOT?
WHY DO YOU DO IT?

HE VISITED ME ONCE, THE DOCTOR DID. WHEN I WAS A VERY LITTLE GIRL. ALL ALONE, AND VERY SCARED. THEN HE VANISHED.

EVERYBODY THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY, BUT I KNEW HE'D BE BACK. TWELVE YEARS LATER, THERE HE WAS, AND HE HADN'T AGED A DAY. HE CAME BACK, JUST LIKE HE SAID HE WOULD. AND HE SAVED MY LIFE.

HE SAVED US ALL THAT DAY, THE WHOLE PLANET.

AND IT WASN'T EVEN THE FIRST TIME. OR THE LAST.

AH. A POINT EMERGES, I SEE.
YES. I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO TRUST HIM. I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO TRUST ME.

BUT WILL YOU LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING? SOMETHING THAT MIGHT CHANGE YOUR MIND?

THAT'S ALL I'M ASKING.

HELLO, CAPTAIN.
MR. WILLIAMS.
PLEASE, IT'S RORY.
POLICE BOX
HELLO!
CAPTAIN PICARD. YOU'VE BEEN A MOST GRACIOUS HOST, ALLOWING US THE RUN OF YOUR MAGNIFICENT VESSEL. MAY I PLEASE RETURN THE HOSPITALITY?
"SOMETHING TO SHOW ME," MISS POND?
AMY AND RORY WILL STAY OUTSIDE, SO YOU NEED HAVE NO FEARS ABOUT YOUR SAFE RETURN. PLEASE, WON'T YOU COME IN?

REMARKABLE...

WELCOME TO THE TARDIS, CAPTAIN. T-A-R-D-I-S. STANDS FOR TIME AND RELATIVE DIMENSION IN SPACE. IT'S THE BEST SHIP IN THE UNIVERSE. HOLD UP—MAYBE THAT'S TWO UNIVERSES NOW.
IT'S BIGGER ON THE INSIDE...
IS IT? HADN'T NOTICED.

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?
A CLEVER LITTLE TRICK, ISN'T IT? TRANSDIMENSIONAL ENGINEERING. THE INTERIOR EXISTS ON AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT DIMENSION FROM THE EXTERIOR. YOU REALLY SHOULD LOOK INTO IT.
BUT AS MUCH AS I DO LOVE SHOWING HER OFF, ESPECIALLY TO A FELLOW CAPTAIN LIKE YOURSELF, THAT'S NOT REALLY WHY WE'RE HERE.

WITH YOUR PERMISSION, CAPTAIN, I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.
I CAN HARDLY SAY "NO," DOCTOR. YOU HAVE MY ATTENTION.
VWORP
VWORP
VWORP
VWORP
VWORP
VWORP
POLICE BOX
OPEN THE DOORS AND HAVE A LOOK, CAPTAIN.

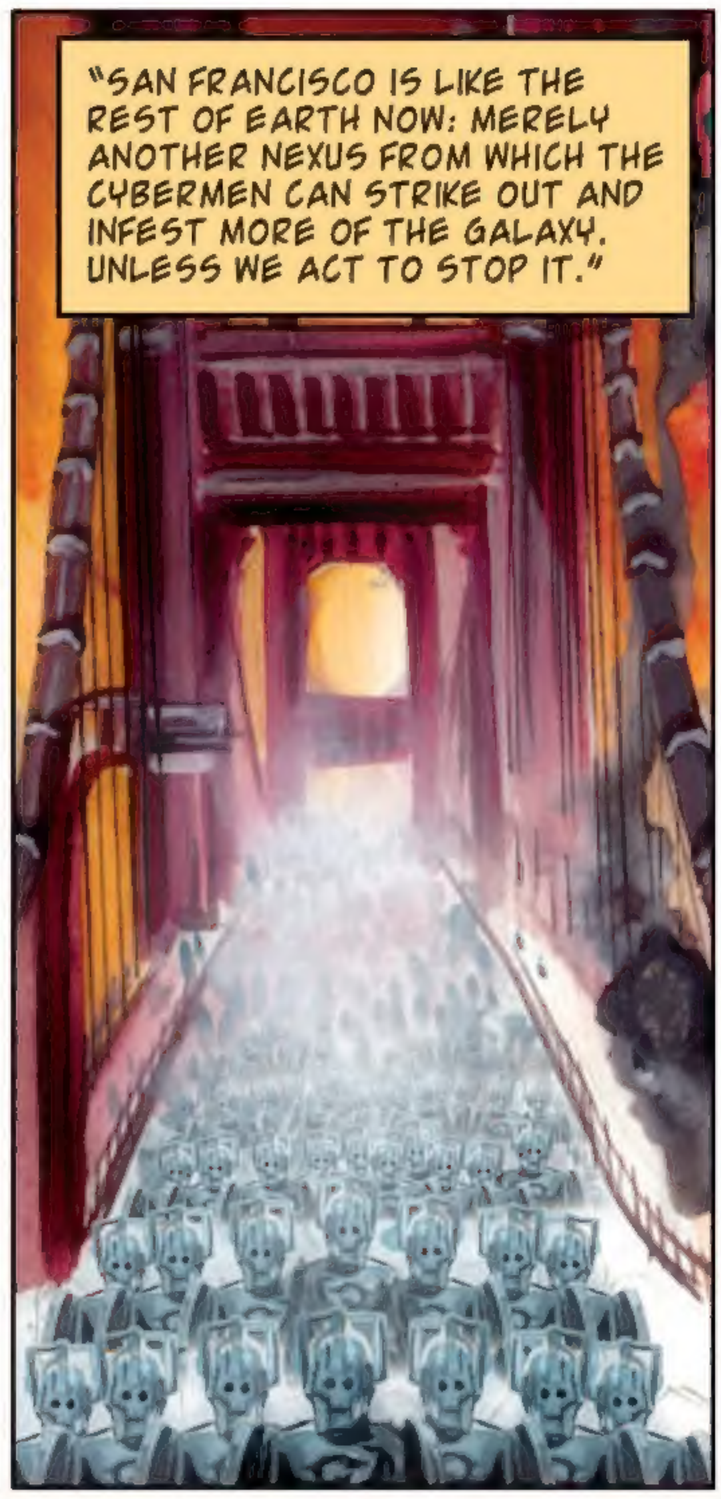
WE'RE 50 YEARS IN THE FUTURE, CAPTAIN.
THE FUTURE?!
OH, DID I NOT MENTION THAT IT ALSO TRAVELS IN TIME?
"THIS IS YOUR LIEUTENANT WORF'S HOMEWORLD OF QO'NOS, IS IT NOT, CAPTAIN? THE FIRST CITY OF THE KLINGON EMPIRE, UNDER UTTER SUBJUGATION OF THE CYBERMEN."
"THIS IS AN ILLUSION. SOMETHING YOU CONJURED TO SWAY ME..."
"I DON'T DEPEND ON FABRICATED SHADOWS TO MAKE MY ARGUMENT, CAPTAIN. IT'S ALL TOO REAL."
WERE IT NOT FOR GUINAN'S FAITH IN YOU, I COULD SCARCELY BELIEVE THIS POSSIBLE.
I DON'T NORMALLY REVEAL MY TRUE NATURE SO LIGHTLY. BUT YOU HAVE TO SEE WHAT LIES AHEAD. COME, LET US SEE WHAT ELSE THE FUTURE HOLDS.

POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX
"THIRTY YEARS LATER, THE PARADISE WORLD OF RAXACORICOFALLAPATORIUS. NOW NOTHING BUT RAW MATERIALS FOR THE CYBERMAN WAR MACHINE.
"TWENTY YEARS PAST THAT, VULCAN FALLS TO THE CYBERMEN, ITS CENTURIES OF WISDOM AND ADVANCED THOUGHT LOST FOREVER."

"THE JUDOON WERE ONCE AN INTERGALACTIC POLICE FORCE. TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, THEY'VE BECOME THE CYBERMEN'S SHOCK TROOPERS, MINDLESSLY DESTROYING EVERYTHING IN THEIR PATH.

"FORTY YEARS LATER. YOUR PEOPLE FOUGHT VALIANTLY, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE DONE. STARFLEET ACADEMY WAS THE LAST HOLDOUT OF FREE HUMANITY IN THE GALAXY."

"YOU'RE LOOKING AT WHAT'S LEFT OF THE HUMAN RACE, MARCHING INTO THE CYBERMEN'S CONVERSION MACHINES.


"SAN FRANCISCO IS LIKE THE REST OF EARTH NOW: MERELY ANOTHER NEXUS FROM WHICH THE CYBERMEN CAN STRIKE OUT AND INFEST MORE OF THE GALAXY. UNLESS WE ACT TO STOP IT."

SO MANY WORLDS.
COUNTLESS. EACH GALAXY, EACH UNIVERSE IN TURN WILL FALL. BUT WE DON'T HAVE TO LET IT HAPPEN, CAPTAIN.
POLICE

WE HAVE TO WORK WITH THE BORG. THEY HAVE THE INFORMATION WE NEED TO PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING.
AND BESIDES THAT, BESIDES THE BILLIONS OF LIVES THAT WE CAN SAVE, BESIDES THE THOUSANDS OF WORLDS WE CAN PROTECT, THERE'S STILL ANOTHER REASON TO PREVENT THE CYBERMEN FROM SLAUGHTERING THE BORG.

WE SHOULD HELP OUR ENEMIES BECAUSE IT'S WHAT MAKES US BETTER THAN THEM.
YOU WIN, DOCTOR. I CONCEDE. TAKE US AWAY FROM THIS HORROR, AND LET US CONTACT THE BORG.
TO BE CONTINUED!